

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A picture decoding and coding apparatus comprising:

a picture coding apparatus including a picture coding unit~~means of coding operable to code~~ pictures and ~~providing~~ provide a picture identifier for each picture as an I , P or B picture,

a priority providing unit~~means operable to correlate~~ each coded picture with a priority identifier which is independent of the picture identifier, and

a transmission control unit~~means of transmitting operable to transmit~~ or ~~storing~~ store the coded pictures with the priority identifiers, and

a picture decoding apparatus including a reception control unit~~means of operable to receiving~~ receive or ~~reading~~ read the coded pictures, and

a picture decoding unit~~means of decoding operable to decode~~ the coded pictures with the priority identifiers,

wherein each priority identifier is used by the picture decoding apparatus to determine whether each picture should be processed or not be processed ~~by the picture decoding means~~ according to a processing capacity of the picture decoding apparatus, and each priority identifier is used independently of the picture identifiers and independently of whether the picture is an I, P or B picture.

2.-19. (Cancelled)

20. (Currently Amended) A picture coding apparatus comprising:

a picture coding means of coding unit operable to code pictures and providing provide a  
picture identifier for each picture as an I, P or B picture[[,]],

a priority providing means of correlating unit operable to correlate each coded picture  
with a priority identifier which is independent of the picture identifier[[,]]; and

a transmission control means of transmitting unit operable to transmit or storing store  
the coded pictures with the priority identifiers to a picture decoding apparatus,

wherein each priority identifier is used by the picture decoding apparatus to determine  
whether each picture should be processed or not be processed by the picture decoding  
apparatus according to a processing capacity of the picture decoding apparatus and each  
priority identifier is used independently of the picture identifiers and independently of whether  
the picture is an I, P or B picture.

21. (Currently Amended) A picture decoding apparatus comprising:

a reception control means of receiving unit operable to receive or reading read picture  
identifiers identifying an I, P or B picture for coded pictures with priority identifiers transmitted  
from a picture coding apparatus, and each picture; and

a picture decoding means of decoding unit operable to decode the coded pictures with the  
priority identifiers,

wherein each priority identifier is independent of the picture identifiers and is used by the  
picture decoding apparatus to determine whether each picture should be processed or not be  
processed by the picture decoding means according to a processing capacity of the picture  
decoding apparatus and each priority identifier is used independently of the picture identifiers and  
independently of whether the picture is an I, P or B picture.

22. (Withdrawn) A sound coding apparatus comprising sound coding means for coding  
sound information, and transmission control means for transmitting or recording coded various  
information,

wherein the coded various information is delivered to a sound decoding apparatus comprising reception control means for receiving coded various information, sound decoding means for decoding the received various information, and output means for delivering the decoded sound.

23. (Cancelled)

24. (Currently Amended) A picture decoding and coding apparatus comprising:

a picture coding apparatus including;

a picture coding means of coding unit operable to code pictures and providing  
provide a picture identifier for each picture as an I, P or B picture,

a priority providing means of correlating unit operable to correlate each coded  
picture with a priority identifier which is independent of the picture identifier, and

a transmission control means of transmitting unit operable to transmit or storing  
store the coded pictures with the priority identifiers, and

a picture decoding apparatus including;

a reception control means of receiving unit operable to receive or reading-read the  
coded pictures, and

a picture decoding means of decoding unit operable to receive the coded pictures  
with the priority identifiers,

wherein each priority identifier is used by the picture decoding apparatus to determine  
whether each picture should be processed or not be processed by the picture decoding means  
according to a processing load of the picture decoding apparatus and each priority identifier is  
used independently of the picture identifiers and independently of whether the picture is a I, P  
or B picture.

25. (Currently Amended) A picture coding apparatus comprising:

a picture coding means of coding unit operable to code pictures and providing provide a  
picture identifier for each picture as an I, P or B pictures;

a priority providing means of correlating unit operable to correlate each coded picture  
with a priority identifier which is independent of the picture identifier; and

a transmission control means of transmitting unit operable to transmit or storing store  
the coded pictures with the priority identifiers to a picture decoding apparatus,

wherein each priority identifier is used by the picture decoding apparatus to determine  
whether each picture should be processed or not be processed by the picture decoding means  
according to a processing load of the picture decoding apparatus, and each priority identifier is  
used independently of the picture identifiers and independently of whether the picture is an I, P  
or B picture.

26. (Currently Amended) A picture decoding apparatus comprising:

a reception control means of receiving unit operable to receive or reading read picture  
identifiers identifying an I, P or B picture for coded pictures with priority identifiers transmitted  
from a picture coding apparatus, and each picture; and

a picture decoding means of decoding unit operable to decode the coded pictures with the  
priority identifiers,

wherein each priority identifier is independent of the picture identifiers and is used by  
the picture decoding apparatus to determine whether each picture should be processed or not  
be processed by the picture decoding means according to a processing load of the picture  
decoding apparatus, and each priority identifier is used independently of the picture identifiers  
and independently of whether the picture is an I, P or B picture.

27. (Currently Amended) A picture decoding and coding apparatus comprising:

a picture coding apparatus including;

a picture coding unit operable to code pictures and ~~providing~~ provide a picture identifier  
for each picture as an I, P or B picture,

a priority providing ~~means of correlating~~ unit operable to correlate each coded picture  
with a priority identifier which is independent of the picture identifier, and

a transmission control ~~means of transmitting~~ unit operable to transmit or ~~storing~~ store  
the coded pictures with the priority identifiers, and

a picture decoding apparatus including;

a reception control ~~means of receiving~~ unit operable to receive or ~~reading~~ read the coded  
pictures, and

a picture decoding ~~means of decoding~~ unit operable to decode the coded pictures with the  
priority identifiers,

wherein each priority identifier is used by the picture decoding apparatus to determine  
whether each picture should be processed or not be processed by the picture decoding means  
when the picture decoding apparatus is overloaded, and each priority identifier is used  
independently of the picture identifiers and independently of whether the picture is an I, P or B  
picture.

28. (Currently Amended) A picture coding apparatus comprising:

a picture coding ~~means of coding~~ unit operable to code pictures and ~~providing~~ provide a  
picture identifier for each picture as an I, P or B picture;

a priority providing ~~means of correlating~~ unit operable to correlate each coded picture  
with a priority identifier which is independent of the picture identifier; and

a transmission control means of transmitting unit operable to transmit or storing-store  
the coded pictures with the priority identifiers to a picture decoding apparatus,

wherein each priority identifier is used by the picture decoding apparatus to determine whether each picture should be processed or not be processed when the picture decoding apparatus is overloaded, and each priority identifier is used independently of the picture identifiers and independently of whether the picture is an I, P or B picture.

29. (Currently Amended) A picture decoding apparatus comprising:

a reception control means of receiving unit operable to receive or reading-read picture identifiers identifying an I, P or B picture for coded pictures with priority identifiers transmitted from a picture coding apparatus, and each picture; and

a picture decoding means of decoding unit operable to decode the coded pictures with the priority identifiers,

wherein each priority identifier is independent of the picture identifiers and is used by the picture decoding apparatus to determine whether each picture should be processed or not be processed ~~by the picture decoding means~~ when the picture decoding apparatus is overloaded, and each priority identifier is used independently of the picture identifiers and independently of whether the picture is an I, P or B picture.

30.-31. (Cancelled)

32. (New) A picture decoding and coding apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the priority identifiers provided for the I pictures include at least two different levels of priority.

33. (New) A picture decoding and coding apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the priority identifiers provided for inter-frame coded pictures and intra-frame coded pictures include a first priority level and a second priority level, respectively, which are different from each other.

34. (New) A picture coding apparatus according to claim 20, wherein the priority identifiers

provided for the I pictures include at least two different levels of priority.

35. (New) A picture coding apparatus according to claim 20, wherein the priority identifiers provided for inter-frame coded pictures and intra-frame coded pictures include a first priority level and a second priority level, respectively, which are different from each other.

36. (New) A picture decoding apparatus according to claim 21, wherein the priority identifiers provided for the I pictures include at least two different levels of priority.

37. (New) A picture decoding and coding apparatus according to claim 21, wherein the priority identifiers provided for inter-frame coded pictures and intra-frame coded pictures include a first priority level and a second priority level, respectively, which are different from each other.

38. (New) A picture decoding and coding apparatus according to claim 24, wherein the priority identifiers provided for the I pictures include at least two different levels of priority.

39. (New) A picture decoding and coding apparatus according to claim 24, wherein the priority identifiers provided for inter-frame coded pictures and intra-frame coded pictures include a first priority level and a second priority level, respectively, which are different from each other.

40. (New) A picture coding apparatus according to claim 25, wherein the priority identifiers provided for the I pictures include at least two different levels of priority.

41. (New) A picture coding apparatus according to claim 25, wherein the priority identifiers provided for inter-frame coded pictures and intra-frame coded pictures include a first priority level and a second priority level, respectively, which are different from each other.

42. (New) A picture decoding apparatus according to claim 26, wherein the priority identifiers provided for the I pictures include at least two different levels of priority.

43. (New) A picture decoding apparatus according to claim 26, wherein the priority identifiers provided for inter-frame coded pictures and intra-frame coded pictures include a first

priority level and a second priority level, respectively, which are different from each other.

44. (New) A picture decoding and coding apparatus according to claim 27, wherein the priority identifiers provided for the I pictures include at least two different levels of priority.

45. (New) A picture decoding and coding apparatus according to claim 27, wherein the priority identifiers provided for inter-frame coded pictures and intra-frame coded pictures include a first priority level and a second priority level, respectively, which are different from each other.

46. (New) A picture coding apparatus according to claim 28, wherein the priority identifiers provided for the I pictures include at least two different levels of priority.

47. (New) A picture coding apparatus according to claim 28, wherein the priority identifiers provided for inter-frame coded pictures and intra-frame coded pictures include a first priority level and a second priority level, respectively, which are different from each other.

48. (New) A picture decoding apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the priority identifiers provided for the I pictures include at least two different levels of priority.

49. (New) A picture decoding apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the priority identifiers provided for inter-frame coded pictures and intra-frame coded pictures include a first priority level and a second priority level, respectively, which are different from each other.